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Teacher's Work Evaluation as an Element of Education Quality

Abstract

One of the basic requirements of a successful quality transformation in education is striving for an increase in the value of the teacher's work quality, being a subject of continuous internal and external interpretation. An increase of the quality of teaching and education is becoming an important issue of pedagogical theory and practice. The article presents an important facet of this issue – inevitable process, the teacher's work evaluation.

Key words: *evaluation, teacher's work quality.*

The history of evaluation reaches the beginning of the 20th cent. (E. Potulicka, 2003, p.17). The recent years of its quick development made it substantially difficult, even to the experts of the subject, to present and analyse modern evaluation as a whole (L. Korporowicz, 1997, p. 7). Such a state of affairs results from, among other things, the fact that evaluation is a very heterogenous creation which originates from the borderland of scientific-research and administrative activities, incorporated in varied strategies of social intervention, planning and supervising actions together with their cultural and political context (R. Parzęcki, 2003, p. 149).

The literature presents many definitions of evaluation. One of the best known was proposed by Ralph Tyler and formulates evaluation as a process aiming at the statement to what degree projected educational goals are in fact realized. Another widely accepted definition of evaluation concentrates on delivery of information needed to make a decision. However, in the recent years many evaluators accepted the view that evaluation is the estimation of the advantages or values, or activity which consist of both description and estimation (D. Nevo, 1997, p. 52).

The term “evaluation” is defined in different ways. The analysis of various definitions shows that:

- evaluation is not synonymous with assessment and supervision, or their new form, the following descriptions refer to it: research, collection of information, analysing, checking, communicating (reporting);
- an indispensable element of evaluation is its valuing actions, i.e., research on whether the actions and their results are valuable, useful; the criteria of value are established by the people programming the actions and its participants (B. Woynarowska, 2007, p. 150)

According to Woynarowska (1995, pp. 70–75) evaluation checks what actually happened during the execution of a plan and why, as well as if, actions were successful, i.e. whether the chosen goal has been reached, and planned tasks have been performed. In this meaning the evaluation consists of two parts: the evaluation of the process – course of actions, what happened and why and the evaluation of the results – whether the goal was reached, whether it was successful or not.

Colin Robson, distinguishing different kinds of evaluation, pointed out that they concentrate on different questions and different aspects of evaluation. In 1980 the American Evaluation Association made categorisation of evaluation types, taking into consideration both the aim and the type of undertaken actions:

- Front-end analysis, the aim is advisory in the phase of planning and implementing of a programme.
- Estimation of the feasibility of evaluation. The subject of estimation are possibilities of implementing various methods and ways of evaluation
- Formative evaluation (development, process). Gives information needed to make amendments to a programme, to modify it and to control it.
- Results evaluation (conclusions, result, effectiveness). Describes results and effectiveness of a programme, especially from the point of making the decisions concerning its continuation, development, reducing and financing it.
- Programme monitoring. Enquires about the agreement with established goals, analyses services performed, counts customers.
- Evaluation of evaluation (derivative evaluation, metaevaluation, control of evaluation). Criticism of evaluation reports, re-analysis of data, external estimation of internal evaluation (C. Robson, 1997, pp. 154–155).

Evaluation can be comprehended twofold: subjectively as an important aspect of self-regulative process especially when it is performed by a subject in reference to their own actions since the beginning, as well as objectively where the process of evaluation can be also performed by an external subject in reference to the subject performing the action. In case of evaluation performed in educational institutions, the first of the above-mentioned types could be called internal evalu-

ation, so such an evaluation which is connected with obtaining feedback information by the authority managing and responsible for the performance of educational actions carried out by it. External evaluation refers to the second of the above-mentioned types of evaluation, as it is performed by an institution especially designed to do so. The aim of evaluation in reference to educational activities is increasing and/or maintaining a high quality of education of the people studying in a given institution (A. Brzezińska, T. Czub, p. 218)

In the modern society reformed school should provide education of the highest quality. In education most often Edward Deming's assumption is accepted, according to which quality is the way of thinking which causes continuous application of searching for the best solutions (E. Polańska, 2003, pp. 81–82)

Standards are applied as the basis for the assessment of the course of evaluation. It needs to be highlighted, following M. Frazer, that the idea of quality as such is often mistaken and identified with standard. However, establishment of standards as such does not define quality (E. Polańska, 2003, p. 82). They provide optimal equilibrium between: usefulness – possibility to use evaluation and its practicality: reliability – evaluation should reveal and pass adequate technical information; feasibility – realism and thoughtfulness of evaluation, decency – evaluation should be performed in a legal and ethical way (K. Denek, D. Hyżak, 2003, p. 126).

The most difficult type of evaluation is self-evaluation, the most valuable and mobilising form, properly carried out it is also a test of human professional maturity. Continuous insight into one's own work, analysing successes and failures, identifying their causes, observation of the direction of changes, facilitates increasingly stronger connection with the occupation. A valuable tool facilitating self-evaluation should be mentioned, namely a competence balance. The balance carried out by the people who are not personally interested in the result of such a balance, the people who may be objective, can show to a person who wants to perform self-evaluation those weak points which are not visible or are possibly unwanted to be seen by this person. Self-evaluation enables a person to become self-critical and is a factor motivating for work over their professional development (W. Rachalska, 2003, pp. 119–120).

Henryk Mizerak (2002, p. 85) gives three models of evaluation. Specified by B. MacDonald and shaped within the last quarter century it differentiates mostly the role of an evaluator and the function of evaluation in the process of social change:

- Bureaucratic evaluation – is imposed from the outside – it is a legal obligation, formed in education by pedagogical supervision institutions. In the result its role is limited in practice to making documents (reports), which are useful in case of external control.

- Autocratic evaluation – limits the evaluator to the role of an expert. He/she is not a consultant, as in the case of the bureaucratic evaluation, but rather academic researcher of a community. He/she must be an expert on the subject of evaluation and,
- Democratic evaluation – the role of the evaluator and meaning of the effects of his/her work are described in a diametrically opposite way than in other models. The evaluator appears here as a medium in the process of communication of many groups interested in the quality of education. The term “medium” means that their mission is to facilitate the process of information exchange. The role of the evaluation is also different, information is used in the process of school work development due to inner motives. Thanks to evaluation the school learns something new about itself and finds motivation in undertaking pro-quality actions.

Evaluating the quality of the teacher's work we need to establish the kind of function which is to be performed. Evaluation can perform many functions:

- formative, to improve and develop the current actions,
- conclusive, to select, give certificates or report,
- psychological or social-political, to motivate and shape awareness, and,
- administrative, to exercise power (D. Nevo, 1997, pp. 53–54).

Authorized to carry out evaluation are competent and trustworthy evaluators. They are the members of teams which possess: technical competence in the subject of the performed measurements, research methodology and data analysis techniques; ability to understand the social context of evaluation; organisational skills, features of objectivity and responsibility; ability to establish good interpersonal relationships and communicate with people and groups included in evaluation as well as individualistic integrity (K. Denek, D. Hyżak, 2003, pp. 126–127). Although, as Barbara Woynarowska contends, many people think that evaluation is a difficult and complicated task, they become discouraged by specialist terms and statistics and consider the evaluation as necessary to be made by experts, they should not assume so, as the author maintains. People can perform their work evaluation on their own, if they gain simple skills and follow basic rules concerning acquiring of certain skills indispensable to perform evaluation, i.e. a large portion of common sense, often asking the question “why”, honesty towards oneself and others, asking the others and getting answers, observing and listening to the comments of the people taking part in the performance of the tasks, regularity in collection of information and an ability to choose what is really useful (B. Woynarowska, M. Sokołowska, 2000, p. 64).

However, while considering who can evaluate, Henryk Mizerak (2002, pp. 80–82) declares that everyone can evaluate, one better, other worse, depending on how they

define evaluation. But not everyone can perform evaluation. To do this you need to have specialist knowledge and skills, which you acquire for years.

In the teacher's work evaluation can bring profits which cannot be overestimated, as it can be a process of continuous development, modifications in various, concrete situations and giving optimal parameters. It can release critical reflection on what the teacher does (Z. Wołk, 2003, p. 59).

In reference to the teacher's work evaluation is of the character of perspective, system view of all participants of an educational situation and a process integrating them around educational tasks. Evaluation mobilises for wide system approach to education. It enables you to select often indiscernible elements of "a hidden programme" and to take them into account in following stages of didactic proceedings. It also enables you to ascertain, how the aims and means of their realisation are seen by the particular recipients, i.e. students themselves, who have different expectations, abilities, and interests. Those opinions give chance to optimise work from the position of a student (Z. Wołk, 2003, p.67)

The evaluation of the teacher's work gives them enormous chance to develop their actions, increase their quality. It inspires to improve effort to realize undertaken goals. It activates the teachers themselves but also activates the whole educational space, the students in particular. Ipso facto it assigns to the student an active role in the process, which in fact concerns them the most. Due to this the student becomes a co-moderator of the educational process. It has educational value in itself. On the other hand, as a result of evaluation the teacher realises their own opinion on their actions. It facilitates limiting the danger of loss of contact with reality, and increasing efficiency of their own work (Z. Wołk, 2003, p. 68).

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